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THE DUTY AND DESTINY OF ENGLAND IN INDIA.

BY SIR EDWIN ARNOLD, KNIGHT COMMANDER OF THE INDIAN
EMPIRE AND COMPANION OF THE STAR OF INDIA.

ISOLATED by their self-completeness and continental seclusion, the inhabitants of the great republic possess, I think, only an imperfect comprehension of the extent and importance of India, and of the nature and scope of British administration in that Asiatic world. They themselves touch no Oriental races, are perturbed by no Oriental problems, and in their national policies have no account to take of Oriental feelings and aspirations. The "Indians" of whom alone they know are as different from the people of Hindustan as one branch of the human tree can possibly be from another; and those other "colored persons" with whom they have to do—Africans, not Asiatics—represent only for them the memory of a great historical fault, and of a sublime and sorrowful expiation; as well as perpetually presenting to them a dark and difficult problem for the future. There is next to no trade between India and the United States, and the wonderful peninsula itself is, as far as geographical remoteness goes, at the longitudinal antipodes for all travelling Americans. Thus, it is not surprising if somewhat confused ideas are held here regarding the Indian dominions of Queen Victoria; and if erroneous and sometimes even unjust notions upon the British occupation exist among the public writers of the States.

Yet it is extremely desirable that the vast, powerful, and enlightened trans-Atlantic portion of the Anglo-Saxon family should truly understand what is the magnificent charge laid in Asia by Providence upon the shoulders of the cis-Atlantic portion of the breed, and how that charge has been, and is being, fulfilled. Personally I could wish with all my heart that many, very many, Americans, instead of few, as at present, would visit the land. The majority of them would come back, I know, full of a new

sense of the noble task which England performs towards all those scores of millions of their Aryan relations—since the people of India proper are really very nearly akin to our Anglo-Saxon blood ; much more closely, indeed, than, say, the Hungarians, the southern Italians, or the Russians. Many a word in constant use among New Yorkers or Bostonians is of direct Sanskrit origin ; many an intimate, familiar philosophical or religious thought has come straight to them from the scrolls of the Vedas or the teachings of ancient Hindu sages ; and if it were possible, at a stroke, to cancel from daily life in these American cities, or in our own, the elements due to Indian metaphysics and Indian mental influences, the gap caused would enormously astonish the unreflecting. Moreover, on the friendly and imperial side ; as a sister people of our speech and of our mighty common line, the American Republic has a special share in the British control of India, and in the prodigious effect which our sway over it exercises on the imagination of the world and upon the fate of Asia. For these reasons, and others, it is heartily to be desired that the public opinion of your great country should rightly comprehend the duty and destiny of England in India, and I gladly avail myself of the honor of an invitation from the conductor of *THE REVIEW* to offer herewith a humble contribution of facts and generalizations towards such an end.

For example, I have read during the recent talk about India, in connection with the temporary trouble in the Pamir, articles in American papers, lightly and carelessly—but, of course, cleverly—penned, as if it were an indifferent matter to civilization generally, and to Americans in particular, whether Russia should ever seriously challenge the British possession of India and perhaps even some day succeed in ousting us from the peninsula. In reality, such an event, could it befall, would prove the direst occurrence for human progress—and indirectly for the United States themselves—since the overthrow of the Roman Empire by the barbarians. It would be the triumph of the Slav over the Saxon, and would set back the development of Asia, and the advancement of the human race generally, at least a thousand years. I can imagine some of the clever young newspaper men, whom I have been everywhere glad to meet, responding in familiar local phrase to this : “ Well, but it would not be *our* funeral ! ” In this respect they would find out their mistake if they should

live long enough. The loss of India to England would mean the breaking-up and decay of our ancient empire ; the eventual spread of Slavonic and Mongolian hordes all over the vacant places and open markets of the world ; the world's peace gone ; again, as in days of Belisarius, the march of sciences, arts, religions, arrested as when Omar burned the Alexandrian Library ; and history once more put back to the beginning of a new effort, under novel and gloomy auspices, to effect that which is the perpetual object of its course and its combinations—the final amalgamation of all the peoples of the globe under one law and one common faith and culture.

That “ real estate ” in Kansas City, where I am writing these pages, would suffer from a decisive victory won over Her Majesty's troops by a Russian army inside India is more, indeed, than I venture to affirm ; but I am quite sure of two facts : one that such a disaster would be as bad a thing for Americans in the long run as for Englishmen, for Hindus, and for the people of Islam ; and the other that it will not happen, because—thanks be to God !—Her Majesty Queen Victoria's strength in India, material and moral, is amply sufficient to-day to guarantee the security and tranquillity of the stupendous charge it bears there against any force, and any combination of forces, likely to be brought forward in challenge of the Empress of India.

The way in which we acquired this immense appanage of the British Empire is often made a matter of reproach, and not, of course, without grounds ; but chiefly by those least thoroughly informed of all the facts. If there is to be no statute of limitations in history ; if all the title-deeds of states are to stand vitiated when any ancient wrong, or violence, or selfishness, or insincerity can be proved against them, then, indeed, I should have to own our Indian possessions forfeit, and the map of the world must be also remodelled from pole to pole. Not alone Clive, Warren Hastings, and Lord Dalhousie must be arraigned and condemned at the bar of international equity, but the Pilgrim Fathers, and Penn the Apostle, and Columbus himself.

In point of fact, our Indian Empire was forced upon us by the irresistible current of events. It began in the utmost simplicity, with a merchant's charter and with a doctor's prescription ! Some London traders got a monopoly of buying and selling goods at the mouth of the Ganges, as well as at

Bombay and Surat ; and were doing a quiet wholesale and retail business when one of their doctors cured the Great Mogul Ferozeshah of a boil on his back, and the princess, his daughter, of a fever. For a fee he received the land where Calcutta now stands, and sold it cheap to **his company**, who erected a factory there called Fort William. After that the merchants became princes in spite of their earnest effort to remain brokers. To protect themselves against the misrule and lawlessness of the Bengal Sonbadhars, culminating in such terrible and unfortunate outrages as the "Black Hole," they were obliged to build strongholds, occupy stations, and enlist soldiers. They were drawn into wars against their will, successively with the French, the Mahrattas, the Mohammedans of the Carnatic, of Beejapore, of the Northwest, etc., not less than with roving Pindarries, restless Madrassesees, and powerful piratical enemies on the sea. As they grew perforce greater and richer, and the central business house in London appointed, one after the other, those famous satraps, called governors-general, it is notable and almost comic to read how the court of directory, upon his nomination, strictly charged each of these magnates in succession to keep out of conflicts, and not under **any** circumstances to acquire any fresh territory ; and how each of them, having stoutly protested at the farewell banquet in the "House" on Cornhill that he intended to bring home an undrawn sword, sent despatches after a year or two, by the long sea route, to say with deep contrition that he had been obliged to defeat a formidable potentate and to annex a splendid province.

In this reluctant and fated way the "Company Bahadur," augmenting time after time by kingdoms and states, increased to its later imperial and commanding proportions, until it ended by gaining the golden prize of Indian sovereignty from all the eager aspirants who had disputed it : from the French, the Portuguese, the Mogul, the Mahratta, the Madras Islamites, the Punjab Sikhs, the predatory robber princes, and even from some of these dangerously allied. The Olympic garland of all the world's glories, contended for from the days of Alexander the Great to those of Avitabile; Lally, Dupleix, and Tippu Saheb, thus fell at last to that band of respectable and pacific city merchants, who started an empire with a physician's prescription, and established a commerce of hundreds of millions sterling with an original

order to their agents at Calcutta "to procure a dozen lbs. of the best tay ye can gett." Nor did they undeserve or misuse that extraordinary and brilliant fortune to any serious or criminal extent. The eloquent thunders of Burke and Sheridan against the great lieutenants of the company were, in reality, largely rhetorical. Clive was better justified than the casual student of history deems when he exclaimed, referring to his impeachment: "By God! I am astonished, when I look back, at my own moderation!" Their grand succession of illustrious rulers—Cornwallis, Amherst, Wellesley, Auckland, Elphinstone, Munro, Dalhousie—all took, in their degree, the enthusiasm of service with which India inspires a man, gave solid peace and safety to the teeming population, and rooted out from the land innumerable ancient cruelties and abuses. It is notable how the recollection of those great and valorous servants of "John Company" still lives with gratitude and reverence among the people of Hindustan. In many a town and village you may see shrines and religious monuments erected to them, where the simple peasants offer daily gifts of rice and flowers, and you may hear to-day in the bazaars of Calcutta the black mothers singing to their children:

*"Hathi par howdah, ghora par jîn,
Jaldi bahir jata Warin Hastîn";*

which means:

"The howdah on the elephant, the saddle on the steed,
And soon will Warren Hastings go riding forth with speed."

It was under that marvellous and masterful "John Company" that India silently but gratefully saw abolished "*sati*," the burning of Hindu widows; "*thuggi*," the organized assassination of travellers by the *roomal*, the handkerchief, of the Thugs; the dreadful and common practice of infanticide, once a general custom in certain provinces; the celebration of the *Meriah*, or human sacrifices to propitiate the gods of rural fertility; the countless and fantastic tyrannies practised by cruel princes on their subjects; the bitter tortures and exactions with which traders who had amassed wealth were persecuted; the holocausts of dying victims drowned daily in the name of religion on the banks of the Hoogli, and many other enormities of the preceding times. Generous in a princely way to their servants, easy with their subjects, liberal and large-minded in council, fearless and im-

placable in war, well-meaning and conscientious in administration, the "Company Bahadur" made for itself in its one hundred years of Oriental sway a name which has rendered commerce imperial, and has, as before in Corinth and Venice, robed traffic in the purple of royalty. It became among the natives a majestic abstraction, something divine, mysterious, and omnipotent, which they worshipped like *Kali*, the Goddess of Power and Terror. It shared with the British throne the task of ruling the Asiatic Empire, and its proconsuls regularly reported, mail after mail, by "double entry," to the sovereign at St. James's and to the chairman of the Honorable East India Company in the City. But the sword which it had forged to serve and sustain it—the Sepoy Army—broke in its still vigorous grasp through carelessness and inadvertence; and the home government, which was obliged to step in with all the might of the realm to save it, succeeded inevitably to the lapsed estates of its sway.

I myself had the never-to-be-regretted and never-to-be-forgotten honor of serving the Honorable East India Company in its Educational Department, and was present at the table of the Governor of Bombay, Lord Elphinstone, on the memorable night when, at Kirkee, in the Deccan, he read aloud to a brilliant company of administrators, public officials, and military and financial officers collected round him, the proclamation transferring British India from the company to the crown. Deep as our devotion was to the Queen's Majesty, and grateful as we all were that those two years of darkness and danger lately traversed had passed away, bringing safety, sunshine, and stronger securities than ever, the emotion produced by that ceremony was extraordinary. I wistfully saw, on that proud and sad evening, renowned old veterans of the wars weeping openly, and gray-haired officials of the famous company, when attempting to speak, choked with their crowding memories. It was the demise of a veritable and mighty potentate at which we assisted; the passing-away of an association of empire-making traders, greater than the proud burghers of the Hague, than the Hanseatic Leaguers, nay, than the Council of Ten itself when, from ocean-throned Venice,

"Thrice did she hold the gorgeous East in fee."

I was in India during that great mutiny of 1857, and, of course, saw and heard things which I prefer now to forget; for we were but a few "Saheb lôk" among many and ferocious ene-

mies, and the typical Englishman "cornered" is no saint. But, also, I saw and heard at that dark time things good to remember in the way of perfect fidelity and fast affection between the races; and, as a matter of fact, the population at large were never, for a moment, against us. Had they been, we must have disappeared as sand castles do before the roll of the sea breakers. A Mahratta *shikari*, one of my hunting servants, casually remarked to me once in the jungle, when we were chatting about the "Sircar": "If we should spit at you altogether and with one mouth, Saheb! we should drown all you English"; and of course that was coarsely true. The mutiny was, however, not Indian, but Mohammedan in origin and essence, and only by the scandal of the "greased cartridges" through the pampered spirit of the high-caste Hindu soldiers, did the Muslims get the Hindus to act with them for once, albeit, if successful, they would have instantly set to work to cut each others' throats. Such an event as that alliance, and the consequent outbreak, is next to impossible again, because communications are now made perfect, the British forces in India are maintained at a scale commandingly strong, and the artillery ever since the mutiny has been kept wholly in British hands.

Moreover, with that mutiny and with the rule of "John Company" terminated the era of annexation; and, partly on that account, ever since then the independent native princes have become heartily loyal, and will remain so, while we deserve their loyalty by our strength, our justice, and our resolution to maintain the peace and prosperity of the land. The Queen's name is to-day far greater and more potent in Hindustan than was even the company's, and "*Maharani Kajai*"—"Victory for the Empress!"—is a battle-cry which would be shouted joyfully by all the warlike races of Rajpootana, Kattiawar, the Punjab, the Deccan, and even the Mohammedan Northwest, if in any crisis Her Majesty chose to admit the chivalry of the native courts to her active service. The regular native army, by which I imply our Sepoy regiments, horse and foot, is in excellent condition to-day as to drill and discipline, and side by side with its English comrades, and led by British officers, would perform doughty deeds of valor, albeit the English officers are by no means numerous enough.

As to the courage of the Sepoy, it is not to be doubted, so long as he has white leadership. I sat once with a detachment of the 25th N. Infantry of Bombay, just returned from the

mutiny campaign under Sir Hugh Rose and Havelock. One among the gallant fellows had lost a hand. He did not tell me himself how it happened, but a comrade explained that Govind had led a party of stormers to a fortress gate, one of those which opened, after the Indian fashion, by a heavy wooden bar which you lifted through a hole. Putting his left hand through the hole to move the sliding latch, it was shorn clean off by the blow of a sabre-blade inside, whereupon the brave soldier thrust in his right hand, opened the gate, and was the first to rush the entrance and take the fort. A hundred similar examples of national valor live in my mind.

With the transference of India to the Crown came advantages and disadvantages. Among the former was the direct impress given of imperial modes of government, through the hands of such eminent and experienced statesmen as Lords Lawrence, Northbrook, and Dufferin ; and among the latter the mischief of getting India “ meddled and muddled ” by entanglement with the House of Commons debates. With the true good sense which ever distinguishes His Royal Highness, the Duke of Cambridge once remarked to me : “ How can you expect India to be well governed any more when the Viceroy has always at his elbow a button which communicates straight with the India Office in Westminster, and with the lobby of the House of Commons ? ” Another result has followed which is of mixed evil and good. Education has been largely extended, with excellent consequences in many directions, but baneful ones in others. Instruction in the vernacular, conveying by native language the simplest and most solid truths and achievements of Western schools, goes on very widely indeed, and is an unmixed good. But in the colleges and high schools, where degrees are conferred or prepared for, the custom has too much been to impart a superficial acquaintance with English literature, which is of no use to the student unless he obtains government employment, and not of very much utility even then. The Brahman, dispossessed of his old authority and influence in the land, has taken largely to these curricula of polite sciolism, and becomes “ a fish out of water,” utterly helpless and malcontent, except he gets into some department of official work. This has mischievously bred a large and restless class of discontented young men, principally of high caste, who receive in the government colleges and high schools a superficial instruction in

English language and literature, which turns them out conceited, but unfitted for the duties of life. As they are far too numerous to be all of them received into the service, the large balance of the disappointed Brahmans constitute a collection of people who agitate and raise political questions for which India is not ripe.

These young smatterers are known on the Bengal side as Baboos, but there are plenty of them to be found on the Bombay side and in the vicinity of every government college. These are they who agitate in the native press, in public meetings, and among foolish and thoughtless circles in England itself, for representative institutions and other absurdities, with ever larger share in the government of India on behalf of themselves and their fellows. I have been myself to some extent guilty of creating a considerable number of these intempestive spirits, since I was president for several years of the Sanskrit College at Poona, in the Deccan, which, with the Elphinstone Institution, constituted the University of Bombay. But my 500 students were almost all Mahrattas, who are of a sturdier type than the Bengali Brahmans. These latter, when they have learned English and dabbled a little in Scott's poems and other ornamental literature, have really nothing that they can do except to turn clerks in a government establishment. They are full of a certain narrow capacity, and when Lord Dufferin once asked me what was the most striking sight I had seen in travelling through India, my answer was, to have beheld a Calcutta Baboo prime minister to the Maharajah of Jeypore. But even in my time we had begun to rectify the mischief of this too genteel education by doing that which ought to be done and will now be done, and in the future, all over India. Technical and practical instruction, with reading, writing, and arithmetic, ought to be rendered as common and easy as can be; but *belles lettres* should be made expensive and comparatively unattractive, so as to divert the minds and thought of the rising intellect of India to botany, mineralogy, chemistry, and the more useful branches of learning, the fruit of which would be that we should gradually get the immense natural resources of India better developed.

In connection with this class of youthful and disappointed agitators, one hears sometimes the government of India reproached for not advancing quicker on the path of social progress and political reform of the modern type. The Marquis of Ripon was

hailed with delight by these well-meaning but hasty people, because he took his inspiration from the Calcutta Baboos and their friends, and tried to rush ahead with what was justly called at the time a "breathless benevolence." But he confessed himself, on returning home, to a friend of mine, that he had no real supporter in that premature policy among English residents in India, "except his Scotch gardener at Simla"; and if one understands the land, it will be seen how rash and precipitate it is to apply to her the constitutional or democratic principles of the West. Patriotism is a word that has not and cannot have any universal meaning in that vast peninsula, which is a continent and not a country. India has never governed itself, and has never once been governed by one supreme authority until the time of the English rule. Consequently, there never was and there never could be that common sentiment among its inhabitants which is the necessary basis of the feeling of patriotism. There never even existed one comprehensive native name for the peninsula, regarding it geographically from Comorin to the Indus. Realize what India is! In the immense territory enclosed by the great mountains on the north and the oceans on the south, it contains nigh upon three hundred millions of souls, divided into innumerable races and classes, and speaking many more than a hundred different tongues and dialects. No countries in Europe, none in North and South America, are more widely divided from each other, in blood, religion, customs, and speech, than the Sikhs, say, from the Moplas of Calicut, or the Mahrattas of Poonah from the Mohammedans of Bhopal.

What has always helped to keep India from becoming homogeneous is her village system, which prevails everywhere. The towns and cities, of which, of course, there are many, are all entirely unconnected in interests and business; and live apart from each other as much as if they were islands in the sea. Between these lie, in the huge interspaces of the rural districts, innumerable villages, each of them constituted on the same plan, and each of them forming the little centre of the agricultural district radiating far round it. These villages are of immense antiquity, and possess an identical system of civil life which probably dates from days long before Moses and the Pharaohs. They never grow smaller or larger, for if the population increases, it migrates a few leagues off and opens up some new jungle or hill.

There are the Patel or chief of the village, the Brahman astrologer, the blacksmith, the carcoon, or accountant, and the low-caste man, whose business it is to deal with corpses, human or animal, and to skin the cattle when they die. There is also always in these "gaums" a panchayet, or council of five, which acts as the little village court, and settles small local questions, under the sanction of the authorities. Amid these countless small centres of Hindu existence the English collector or his assistants go round annually, taking from the cultivators the light assessment which makes the government land tax, and holding among them a perambulating court of justice, which deals with more serious civil and criminal cases, or else refers them to the higher tribunals.

If all India were composed entirely of these villages, and the villages were tenanted by exactly the same sort of people, there might be such a thing as a homogeneous peninsula, for which its children might feel that sentiment of patriotism which is evoked with us by the mere name of England, and which unites all the States of America, in spite of their different and sometimes discordant interests, under the star-spangled banner. But the numberless millions of that land are split up in every direction, so that the human strata cross and recross each other, and show a hundred lines of cleavage. There is, first of all in the whole region, the broad distinction to be ever borne in mind between Hindus and Mohammedans, the proportion between these being, as nearly as I can remember, about seventeen to one. Yet this proportion gives Queen Victoria so many Muslim subjects in India that she rules, taking them into account with the same religionists in Ceylon, Malay, Africa, Arabia, and elsewhere, three times as many of "the faithful" as the Sultan of Turkey himself. These Indian Mohammedans represent and are derived from the old governing dynasty of the Mogul. They largely retain, except down in Madras, the ways and feelings of a lordly and dominant race; constantly quarrelling with the Hindus upon religious questions, and always ready to fly at their throats but for the strong restraining hand of the English Government. As matters stand in the great Indian cities, we have occasionally the "work of the world" to keep the peace between the Mohammedans and the Hindus, especially at the chief festivals; while every now and then, between whites, the Hindus will throw the carcass of a pig into a Mohammedan mosque-court, or the Mohammedans will openly

slaughter a cow, each of which unkind acts sets a whole province thirsting for blood. Nothing is more certain than that, if our power were withdrawn, these two main classes of Indian inhabitants would wage a war of mutual extermination.

And while this main division exists, the Hindus themselves are, first of all, cut up into four chief castes, with countless other and minor divisions, which keep them definitely apart, and will do so, it appears, for centuries to come. Up to this date modern civilization and the ideas introduced by us have had little or no effect upon that antique institution, which is supported by the vast bulk of Hindu opinion. The high-caste soldiers who fill our regiments of horse and foot, and who would cheerfully follow their English officers to death in battle, would fling away their half-cooked dinner if even the shadow of their commanding officer should fall upon their cooking-place; and this out of no disrespect for him, whom they often love and always revere, but because of an immemorial religious prescription. I had myself as a friend a native officer, who fell very sick, and to whom I said one day: "Luximan, I could restore you to health if I might give you, without your knowledge, a pint of strong beef-tea every day." He made me a feeble salaam, and answered: "Saheb, when I recovered, if I had found out what you had so kindly done, I should want to kill you at the first opportunity." This is enough to show that socially there is no unity among the inhabitants of India, nor any possibility of it, while they are further split up by geographical and natural limitations, and by old distinctions between the many kingdoms of India; so that, as I have remarked, the Rajputs are more remote from the people of Cuttack, and the Todas of the Blue Mountains less akin to the mountaineers of Thibet, than the New Yorkers are distinguishable from the Esquimos, or the Southerners of Richmond from the red Indians of Winnipeg.

Since the time of Alexander of Macedon and of King Asoka, we are the first whose large and undisputed authority has practically brought India under one sceptre. Indeed, the renowned Macedonian never even saw the Ganges; and Asoka, the famous Buddhist monarch, with all his widespread influence, did not rule a tenth part of the peninsula. It lies now, from north to south and from east to west, under the benignant hand of the "Maharani," Her Majesty the Queen of England. And per-

haps by the net-work of railways established, and the good roads which far and near link the large territories of the country, as well as by the electric wire and the postal service, India is at last becoming, as far as the thing is possible, a country and not a continent. Nor is it without hopeful foresight of such future amalgamation that we have everywhere instituted and encouraged a municipal system in the towns, which will help to teach Indian citizens the art of self-government. But when folks talk of ready cut-and-dried representative systems for India, and a hasty adoption of the civil and social methods of the West, they talk the "breathless benevolence" of ignorance. Modern institutions are not yet possible in that vast and varied world, which for many and many a year to come wants nothing so much as the immense tranquillity, the *burra choop*, which the Queen's government secures to it.

With what far-off and final object, then, it may be asked, does that government hold rule? And what do we propose to ourselves as the outcome of our continued guardianship? First of all, they do not ask these questions in India. The Eastern mind, never restless like the Western, is thoroughly Christian in this, that it "takes little thought for the morrow." It loves well to live along, waiting for history and destiny—which is the will of Parabrahm—to develop things. For it is necessary to understand the mind of India, as well as the face of the beautiful land and its immemorial divisions. India, even in her rural and least-educated districts, is metaphysical and philosophical to an extent unrealized by the practical and material West. This comes by inheritance. The Hindu peasant succeeds by an unconscious birthright to profound and far-reaching ancient ideas which make life's facts present themselves to him in quite a different light from the aspect which they bear for us.

Take, for example, the familiar question of the remarriage of Hindu widows, very much discussed and advocated by the "breathless-benevolence" school. Now, nothing would, on the surface, seem more reasonable or more seasonable than that all kindly people in England and America should denounce the present Hindu system. Under this, at five years of age the little Indian maiden is publicly betrothed to a Hindu boy of seven or eight, of whom she is from that time, in social regard, the wife. When they are thirteen and seventeen, respectively, they will live together in the house of the bridegroom's father.

But if the bridegroom should die before this, or die shortly after the marriage, the Hindu girl must remain a child-widow for all her life, her ornaments taken from her, her hair cut short, and wearing, not the glad garments of crimson and gold, or purple and silver, which mark the happy state of an Indian wife, with gold and silver bangles and the bright vermilion mark on the forehead, but clad in the sad white *sari* of her loneliness. Nothing can seem more deplorable. But if you understand Indian ideas, you will see at once how serious a matter, socially speaking, any rash reform might become. The universal Hindu belief is that so great a calamity as the death of her husband could only befall any hapless child or woman because of some great offence committed by her in a previous existence, and that patient solitude is the right expiation.

Of course the Western reformer will immediately exclaim: "We have no patience with such fantastic beliefs. Why, in the name of sober sense and of the Christian government that rules India, should millions of these poor females be compelled to lead a solitary and mournful existence for so doubtful a tenet as this of expiating by patience and loneliness the wrong deeds done in some former life?" True! I warmly agree. But consider a little how this thing works socially. The little maid, from and after the time of her betrothal, wholly belongs to the family of her bridegroom, and is wholly chargeable to that family; so that—since every girl not deformed, sick, or lunatic, is betrothed as early as possible in India—there is no such thing as a woman in that land without protection and subsistence among all the immense numbers to whom this rule applies. For the sake of the dead husband or bridegroom, his family or its collateral branches will faithfully support her; and does support her to the end of her life. But if you take away that supreme motive of regarding her as belonging to her dead consort, and destined to rejoin him by virtue of her patience and fidelity, if you allow any or all of these young widows to remarry,—or, rather, compel Hindu civil law to allow it,—it will soon be nobody's business to shelter and protect one who is disputed, like the woman in the New Testament, by different husbands. The consequences of such a reform would be that in a few years you would have millions of Indian women absolutely destitute, and for the first time you would establish, what does not now exist in the peninsula, a pauper class.

I remember astonishing one of our English ministers of state, who was president of the Poor-Law Board, by asking him if he had ever studied the Indian poor-law system. "No," he said, "but I wish greatly to do it, since there must be much to learn from a country with so vast a population. Pray tell me what it is." I replied : "There is none at all !" And that is the case. In India, as in Japan, there prevails the very peculiar and very admirable custom, immensely convenient to a government, of what is called by Hindus the *bhaobund*. Under this, anybody out of means goes right away to his nearest relative who happens to be fairly well off, and will be cheerfully maintained by him until such time as he can find something to which to turn his hand. In the same really Christian spirit, among the Japanese people also, if the police see any one begging for alms, they make inquiries at once as to his friends and relatives, and carry him off to the person who may be most reasonably called upon to take heed that he does not degrade his family by asking charity. Religious mendicants abound in both countries. But that is a different matter altogether ; and under the existing system in India nobody ever saw a woman of the three higher castes stretch out her hand to the passer-by to ask for help. She has and can have no need ; but would soon sink into it if in our reforms we did not regard the peculiar bearings of religious thought in the land.

This example is cited only to show how necessary it is, in any beneficent councils conceived for the sake of the Indian population, to have regard to the peculiar manners and beliefs of the people. Far be it from me to desire to maintain such a system, which links the living too severely to the dead, and is, indeed, a continuation under another form of that rite of *sati*, or the burning of widows, which, while it had a beautiful and sublime side, was a social evil which we did well to abolish from the land. Herein also much misconception prevails, however, for *sati* was at no date very prevalent in India. As far as I could ascertain, there never occurred more than about a thousand instances in a year throughout the land, even when, as at first, the English Government did not interfere with it. Martyrs are not so common as some imagine, even in India itself.

The duty of the English Government to India is, beyond all question, to administer that great special and separate Asiatic world for its own good and for its own sake, and not for the profit

of the mother country. It is not to be denied for a moment that we derive, directly and indirectly, immense advantages from our possession of Hindustan. First of all, it gives us, in the eyes of the world, an imperial prestige that nothing can surpass ; and I have said before, and repeat, that the loss of India, if that were possible, would mean the sure and speedy decay of the British Empire, and the falling-away, one by one, of our great colonies. Next to the place which India fills in the imagination of the world may be ranked in importance the large commerce which we carry on with her ; the very considerable revenue derived from her people ; of which, although most goes to the necessities of the country, it is not to be forgotten that a considerable portion supplies the salaries of that numerous civil service, covenanted and uncovenanted, which performs the duties of government ; and that pension and other funds drawn from the same source sustain a great many English families in comfort and even in distinction. But right nobly does that civil service repay to India the funds which it thus derives from it. No one acquainted with the subject will gainsay me when I state that there does not exist a more accomplished, competent, or devoted body of men in the whole world than the civil servants of India.

From the earliest times until now this illustrious company of hard-worked officials has preserved unbroken the tradition of a perfectly spotless and unsparingly energetic administration, so that, as in the case of the judges of England, the "civilians" of India, almost without exception, have come to place themselves beyond the reach of suspicion or of reproach. In the by-gone times son and grandson succeeded father and grandfather in this official hierarchy, almost as a matter of course. And the method had this benefit in it, that it preserved an unbroken habitude in Indian affairs, so that we had seldom or never in the ranks of this perpetual dynasty of duty what is called "a Queen's bad bargain." Later in the day there came in that movement which abolished purchase in the army and appointment by favor to the Indian civil service. Nominations and promotions are all effected now by the universal plan of examination, which, while it does away with nepotism, and insures a due supply of brains for this most exacting work, gives us sometimes not quite the ideal man, as regards physical qualities and that custom of command which used to attach to the "Indian" and aristocratic class from

which we drew our Indian servants. Sir Charles Trevelyan and his son, Sir George, were the main agents in that great reformation ; but I myself heard Sir Charles once say at the table of his son : “ We have altered the system, but I am, nevertheless, delighted to observe that the old familiar names are still constantly coming up in the lists of candidates obtaining appointments in India under the new competitive plan.” And true it is that something in the magnificent surroundings of that service, in the dignity of its duties, in the inspiration of its imperial tasks, seems to turn almost all new comers into the old masterful and serviceable mould ; so that the Queen’s justice is still carried purely and faithfully to the door of every hut in India, and the collector’s camp, as it passes through the districts, is still the recognized and trusted centre of clemency, equity, and consideration for the villagers, and a cause of terror only to the tigers which decimate their cattle ; for wherever there is an Englishman in India, there is almost sure to be a passionately eager and enthusiastic sportsman.

The clear duty of England, therefore, towards India is to legislate and administer for her good, regardless of selfish considerations, and only careful not to lose step with the slow progress of the Asiatic mind by adopting the restless paces of Western reform. From the beginning until to-day that duty has never been put out of mind. Seventy years ago when somebody found Mountstewart Elphinstone sitting in his tent at night surrounded with piles of school-books and asked the Governor of Bombay what he was doing, he—one of the most devoted of administrators—replied: “ I am paving our way out of India.” I do not believe the English Government would hesitate at any measure, even if it involved the eventual loss of India, could it be made clear to them that that measure was for the sure and lasting benefit of the millions committed to our charge in those wide regions. But it is their opinion, and it is honestly mine, who love India as well as I love England, that the connection between the two peoples is one ordained by Divine Providence itself, and that the issues of that long strife that gave the great country to us, out of the hands and above the heads of so many fierce claimants, was a happy result for India, first, and after that for England ; but chiefly for her in the noble duties and in the majesty of the mighty and onerous charge laid upon her.

Nowadays the Indians have become fellow subjects of the Queen,

with general rights equal to the rights of those who live nearest the throne. An Indian Parsee gentleman has been a candidate for Parliament, and might have sat in it. Indian princes are among the highest knights of the English orders ; Indian attendants accompany Her Majesty everywhere ; and it is well known that the heart of Queen Victoria is attached to no part of her boundless dominions more closely than to those in India ; whose people,—to speak what is the truth,—high and low, rich and poor, reverence the Empress, in return, as a sort of incarnation of power and goodness. It has come, indeed, to this, that India belongs to England, because England belongs to India ; and having buried in her soil so many thousands of brave, devoted women and tender children, as well as gallant men, the title-deeds of my country to that proud and faithful guardianship are written almost more clearly in tears than in blood.

If a country like Russia challenges this long and faithful protectorate, it certainly is not and never has been upon the pretence that she could administer the country better, or be more in honest and useful sympathy with its people. Although the Muscovites have learned to treat with policy and consideration their vanquished Mohammedan races in Samarcand, Bokhara, Khiva, Merv, Kashgar, and elsewhere, they are not a tolerant race, as has been only too sadly shown by their conduct of late towards the Jews. In fact, Russia makes no affectation of political beneficence in approaching the gateways of India ; she obeys two imperative impulses of national yearning and state necessity—one of them being the ever-pressing instinct to get down from her icy isolation to the sunshine and the sea ; the other the never-forgotten mandate of Peter the Great not to rest till Constantinople is possessed. So obvious is the force of these two motives that the patriotic and sagacious Turkish statesman, Fuad Pacha, was wont to say : “ Were I Russian, I would shake the world down to gain Stamboul ! ”

In half-conscious pursuit of these objects, Russia has pushed along from the Caspian to Merv, always thinking to use a real or menaced attack upon India as a flank diversion for her main assault upon the Bosphorus. We have stopped her again and again, on both wings of her advance ; and from the political point of view the reason of this is clear, when your readers reflect what the Queen’s Mohammedans would think and feel if we ever

abandoned Stamboul to the Slav. While Britain continues a first-class power, Russia will never hold Constantinople, and will never enter the gateway of India except to be rolled back, in confusion, blood, and ruin, all the way along her track of advance, to Krasnovodsk and the Caspian marshes. If ever she defies in earnest the British Lion couched at Quetta and at Attock, the strife will not end until the Romanoff dynasty has been ruined, and Russia broken up. This is so well understood that the most peaceful men on both sides are those who command affairs, and best understand the momentous problem.

But English policy must follow the course of events, and His Imperial Majesty the Czar is served upon the frontier by restless and enterprising officers, who, after doing what mischief they could on the Afghan frontier, have of late opened up new troubles on the eastern slope of the Pamir, where they have instigated certain hill tribes to provoke the British border guards. The Pamir passes are impracticable for warfare. Anybody who will read M. Bonvalot's book will perceive that only small parties, and those with difficulty, can cross the inhospitable and dreadful *cols* of that "roof of the world." Moreover, in recklessly wandering towards Cashmere, by the Pamir Mountains, the Muscovites provoke and alarm China as well as England; and, briefly, they will most assuredly have to retire. It is an instance of the erroneous statements that are current to notice the Russian journals accusing England of annexing Cashmere by recent sinister measures; whereas, if they knew the facts, they would be aware that Goolab Singh, the former ruler of the country, freely offered it to us after the second Punjab war, and we refused it then and have since always refused it, the country being sufficiently at all times under our influence. The recent *alerte* was directed against the frontier of Cashmere, but there is no military road into India by that path; and the affair must be considered, unless it takes far larger proportions, as a mere diversion and piece of mischief, which Lord Lansdowne will know very well how to checkmate.

The invader who means earnestly to dispute India with the British must come by different roads and in a less furtive manner. If ever Russia has the will and the power to knock in serious purpose at the northern gates of India, she will come by Merv and Herat; and the great battle outside the frontiers of Hindustan will take

place at Girishk upon the river Helmund. We must not lose that battle, and we shall not lose it, for all India will be watching at our backs ; and we owe to them, as the first guarantee of our fitness to be their rulers and protectors, the spectacle of our fearless and sufficing might. But if we lost it, we should be far, very far indeed, from losing India. The command of the sea, the guardianship of Egypt, the possession of those important sea stations, Malta and Gibraltar and Aden, are what really give us power to hold India against the world. And while we are masters of the sea, India will never be forced to change her allegiance. Even in the great mutiny there was never any real danger of our expulsion. An old Hindoo astrologer told me that the prince of his state consulted him as to the course that should be adopted towards the then struggling and apparently overmastered Sahebs. "What did you say, Shastri?" I asked. He answered: "I told the Maharaja, without even consulting the stars, that if we killed every one of you all but the last, he would bring the rest of the nation back upon us across the water."

The real pith of the problem lies deeper. India is well contented, safe, tranquil, and prosperous. Not actively grateful to us ; for no people ever are grateful for being well governed ; but deeply assured, as far as her masses think on the subject at all, that the "Queen's peace" in India is the truest blessing she ever had from the gods, and most desirable to maintain. India is well contented, and will flourish so long as England's strength suffices, along with justice purely administered, and tolerance truly maintained, and reforms seasonably introduced and fostered, to keep unbroken that deep peace, the first which India has known in all her history. To day, at least, the strength of England is abundantly adequate by land and sea to hold the country against any challenge.

But—and here comes the point—the question of questions is whether the democracy of Great Britain, our household-suffrage men, who have of late come to supreme power in the realm, comprehend their Indian Empire and care to maintain it. Undoubtedly, if they did comprehend, they would care ; for no nobler charge was ever laid upon a people than thus to repay to India—the antique mother of religion and philosophy—the immense debt due to her from the West. There are, of course, many collateral considerations which ought to move the popular

mind ; such as commercial benefit, colonial advantage, and national prestige ; but these are weak in comparison with the force which ought to be exercised upon the general imagination by the sublime duty laid upon Great Britain, if ever any duty was sublime, by the visible decree of Providence itself, and it may be said, consecrated to the pride and fidelity of succeeding generations of Englishmen, as well as, in past days, by the brightest valor, the noblest devotion, the highest capacity, and the most unflinching discharge of duty. Upon this it all turns.

I believe myself that the people of England, who from all ranks of the home country have themselves furnished the soldiers, the officers, the administrators, and the statesmen that have built up British India, hold at heart, as a cherished principle, the maintenance of that glorious Oriental empire until such time as our duty is fully and finally done to the great and wonderful land. Nothing on the political horizon as yet even begins to proclaim that the task of England is accomplished towards India and her countless peoples ; and therefore nothing, in my mind, at present so much as even threatens the manifest destiny of England to pass insensibly and happily from the position of the mistress and protectress of the peninsula to that of its first friend, its sister, and its ally, in some far-off day when the time is come for India to manage her own happy destinies.

EDWIN ARNOLD.